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THE LOVE OF NATURE IN VERGIL

I

A very interesting and valuable book is the volume entitled *The Love of Nature Among the Romans During the Later Decades of the Republic and the First Century of the Empire*, by Sir Archibald Geikie (London, John Murray, 1912. Pp. xi + 394). The author, well known as a geologist, was President, in 1910-1911, of The Classical Association of England. In January, 1911, at the annual meeting, he delivered a Presidential Address on the literary and artistic treatment among the Romans of certain aspects of nature. This address was subsequently expanded into the volume mentioned above. If we are surprised—we Americans—that a scientist was President of The Classical Association of England, and that out of his Presidential Address sprang such a volume, we may remember that Sir William Osler was likewise President of that Association (for some comments on his Presidential Address see *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 13.89-90). We may remark also that Dr. Walter Leaf, the well known Homeric scholar, has been for years primarily a banker, and that Professor D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, the biologist, has made most important contributions to classical scholarship (compare e. g. his fine volume, *A Glossary of Greek Birds*, his address as President of The British Association for the Advancement of Science, which was entitled *Magnalia Naturae*, or *The Greater Problems of Biology*, in which much was said in praise of Aristotle, and his translation of Aristotle, *Historia Animalium*. For a notice of the last two works see *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 5.57-58, 65-66).

The contents of Sir Archibald Geikie's book are as follows:

I. The Saturnian Land and its People (1-22); II. Country and Town (23-49); III. The "Divini Gloria Ruris"—Lucretius, Virgil, Horace (50-82); IV. Rural Scenes and the Elegiac Poets (83-111); V. Flowers in Roman Life (112-128); VI. Roman Gardens (129-140); VII. Trees and Woodlands (141-160); VIII. Flowers and Foliage in Roman Art (161-169); IX. The Animal World in Roman Life (170-203); X. Day and Night (204-235); XI. The Seasons (236-256); XII. Springs, Rivers, and Lakes (257-282); XIII. Mountains (283-297); XIV. The Sea-Shores (298-321); XV. The Open Sea (322-348); XVI. The Underworld (349-377); Index (379-394).

It is not my intention, at this time, to enter upon a general discussion of Sir Archibald Geikie's book. I purpose, rather, to extract from it, from time to time, various passages in which the author seems to me to say things of value with respect to Vergil (the book, I have

found, is not readily accessible). At a later day I may return to his book, and compile what its author has to say about Lucretius, and, perhaps still later, what he says about Horace and Ovid.

On pages 57-58 there is the following passage:

By none of the Latin poets were the rural landscapes of Italy sketched so often and with such loving devotion as by Virgil. . . . Born on the fertile plains of the Po, yet within sight of the towering Alps on the one side and the heights of the Apennines on the other, he was fortunate in the smiling landscapes of meadow, woodland, and river amidst which his youth was passed. They inspired his earliest verse, and in after years when he had risen to fame and had long quitted his paternal home, these same scenes continued to fill his imagination and to give a special charm to all his poetry. Thus, what he called, in a striking phrase, the "divini gloria ruris", which had irradiated his boyhood, remained with him as a bright and animating influence to the end of his life.

In a footnote on this passage Sir Archibald Geikie wrote as follows:

If the last eight lines of the fourth *Georgic* can be understood to mean, what they seem literally to imply, that the whole poem was written at Naples, Virgil's memory for the details of the scenery and rural life amidst which he spent his youth must have been extraordinarily retentive. His descriptions and allusions are given not only in that poem but also in the *Aeneid*, with as much force and accuracy as if he were still living among the landscapes of the north.

All this, it would seem to me, is exactly what we should expect of one born to be a poet—at least of one born to be a great poet. W. Y. Sellar, Horace and the Elegiac Poets, 9-11 (Oxford University Press, 1892), had written in similar vein of Horace. Of that poet Sir Archibald Geikie writes as follows (72-75):

His birthplace lay not in a luxuriant plain, like that of Virgil, but at Venusia, in a somewhat rugged and sterile territory on the eastern flank of the Apulian Apennines. Of that first home he retained some vivid impressions which are again and again alluded to in his poems. These recollections are of interest in showing that the poet was not without an eye for the features of landscape which he could felicitously describe, often only by a happily chosen word. In those early years, too, living among the sturdy yeomen and peasantry of Apulia, he became intimately acquainted with the simple upright lives of the old Sabellian race, for which he afterwards expressed such admiration.

Two reminiscences of the region of his boyhood, which had imprinted themselves deeply on his mind, are . . . the scarcity of water in the dry season, and the fierce impetuosity of the river Aufidus in time of flood. He remembered his native district as "pauper aquae" (<Carm. 3.30. 11; Epod. 3.16>, for in summer many of the springs and brooks cease to flow

at the surface, and the drainage in large measure finds its way towards the sea in underground passages among the limestone rocks. But still more did he recall the one large river of the district, the Aufidus, which while in the hot season it may dwindle to a mere shrunken streamlet, in seasons of heavy rain bears headlong to the Adriatic the accumulated waters of the greater part of Apulia. He loved to remember that he was born near the far-resounding Aufidus. The floods of this river remained in his memory as a kind of type of Nature in her most energetic mood. Every time that he takes occasion to bring its name into his poems, he couples with it a different epithet, indicative of its impetuosity and destructiveness, as it rushed along with a roar that could be heard from far. Not improbably it was to some catastrophe which he had himself witnessed or had heard of, that he refers when he speaks of men who, greedily seeking for more than their fair share of this world's goods, are apt to be swept away, together with the bank on which they stand, by the fury of the "Aufidus acer". And when he wished to picture the irresistible onset of the Roman army against the barbarians, he likens it to the "bull-like Aufidus as he waxes wroth, and rushes down with dire havoc upon the fertile plains below" <Serm. 1.1. 58; Carm. 4.14. 25>.

Among the incidents which he thought worthy of note in his record of the famous journey to Brundisium, Horace includes a reference to the part of the road where the familiar hills of Apulia began to come into view <Serm. 1.5.77>. Conspicuous among these heights would be the lofty old volcanic cone of the Mons Vultur, on the wooded slopes of which he had in his childhood fallen asleep, and, as he relates, had been covered with young leaves by the doves of legend <Carm. 3.4.9>. But the most touching proof of his affection for the landscapes of his boyhood is to be found in the noble envoy with which he accompanied the publication of the first three Books of his *Odes*. Looking triumphantly forward to an immortality for his verse, he was confident that his name, associated with his Apulian home and the rushing Aufidus, would survive the lapse of ages and would remain ever fresh in the praise of the time to come <Carm. 3.30>.

The concluding sentences have for me a very special interest. Sir Archibald Geikie's interpretation of Horace, Carm. 3.30.10-14 is possible only if we join the *qua*-clauses to *dicar*. In July, 1894, no scholar known to me was wholly willing to explain the syntax and the thought in this way. I discussed the matter in a paper presented to the American Philological Association, at its Twenty-fifth Annual Meeting, held at Williams College, in July, 1894 (see the Transactions and Proceedings of the Association, 25.xxvii-xxx). I noted that editors joined the *qua*-clauses either to *ex humili potens* or to *princeps deduxisse modos*. Their reason for doing such violence to the word-order and the rhythm is set forth well by Mr. Page's remark, "Horace does not wish to limit his fame to his native district, but that his native district should share in his own world-wide glory". In a word, the editors felt that, had they been in Horace's place, they would have claimed world-wide fame: therefore Horace must have made such a claim. I argued against the editors that it was not true that Horace had become *ex humili potens* in Apulia, and that he had not in Apulia 'made Aeolic song at home among Italian measures' (or 'woven Aeolic song to Italian measures', if that is rather the sense). His

poetry and his consequent fame belonged to Rome. To my mind, Horace had said this, in effect, 'The Apulians will sing of me as *ex humili potens*, and as *princeps Aeolium carmen ad Italos deduxisse modos*'. In a word, Horace was to be a prophet with honor in his own country (as well as everywhere else).

Now, I have never been one of those who demand that an interpretation must be supported by a parallel passage. Why must we limit an author to the utterance of a thought that has been uttered before (even if we recall and accept, at full face value, Terence's ingenious defence, in *Eunuchus* 19-41, against the charge of plagiarism, ending with the famous line, *Nullumst iam dictum quod non sit dictum prius*). But for those who can not be happy without such a parallel I was fortunate enough to be able to present a perfect parallel in Martial 1.61.1-12, especially in the last two verses:

te, Liciniane, gloriabitur
nec me tacebit Bilbilis.

I noted that Martial might well have had Horace's ode in mind: that he knew it appears from Martial 8.3.5-8, and 10.2.9-12.

I can now add another parallel, Propertius 4.1. 61-64:

Ennius hirsuta cingat sua dicta corona:
mi folia ex hederâ porrigē, Bacche, tua,
ut nostris tumefacta superbiat Umbria nostris,
Umbria Romani patria Callimachi!

As every one knows, Propertius was born in Umbria. For further evidence that he knew Horace, Carm. 3.30, see his poems, 3.1.33-36, 3.2. 15-24.

When, in the fall of 1894, I received a copy of Professor C. L. Smith's admirable edition of the *Odes* and *Epodes* of Horace, I noted with pleasure that, in his note on Carm. 3.30. 10, he joined the *qua*-clauses with *dicar*.

The matter remained in my mind, till, in a paper published in *The Classical Review* 17.156-158 (April, 1903), I was able, I thought, to present further evidence of the correctness of my interpretation of the passage. In that paper, after summarizing the earlier discussion, I quoted the following passage from J. L. Strachan-Davidson, *Cicero*, 6-7 (in the *Heroes of the Nations Series*: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1901):

The statesman who came from a country-town in Italy was perhaps more than compensated for the lack of ancestral connection with the city of Rome, by the keen interest which his fellow-townsmen and neighbours took in his political career, by their pride and delight in his exploits, and by their anxiety for the reputation which reflected credit upon their native place. In this respect the country-towns were in strong contrast with the civic and suburban districts, such as that of Tusculum, which were surfeited with famous and noble families and were careless about their local worthies.

In writing thus Mr. Strachan-Davidson was relying on Cicero, *Pro Plancio* 19-22:

Tu <= Laterensis> es e municipio antiquissimo Tusculano, ex quo sunt plurimae familiae consulares . . . ; tot ex reliquis municipiis omnibus non sunt.

Hic <= Plancius> est e praefectura Atinati, non tam prisca, non tam honorata, non tam suburbana. Quantum interesse vis ad rationem petendi? Primum utrum magis favere putas Atinates an Tusculanos suis? Alteri <= Atinates>—scire enim hoc propter vicinitatem facile possum—cum huius ornatissimi atque optimi viri, Cn. Saturnini, patrem aedilem, cum praetorem viderunt, quod primus ille non modo in eam familiam, sed etiam in praefecturam illam sellam curulem adtulisset, mirandum in modum laetati sunt: alteros—credo, quia refertum est municipium consularibus, nam malivolos non esse certo scio—numquam intellexi vehementius suorum honore laetari. Habemus hoc nos, habent municipia nostra. Quid ego de me, de fratre meo loquar? quorum honoribus agri ipsi prope dicam montesque faverunt. Num quando vides Tusculanum aliquem de M. Catone illo . . . gloriari? at in quemcumque Arpinatem incideris, etiam si nolis, erit tamen tibi fortasse etiam de nobis aliquid, sed certe de C. Mario audiendum. . . . Omnia quae dico de Plancio dico expertus in nobis, sumus enim finitimi Atinatibus. Laudanda est vel etiam amanda vicinitas, retinens veterem illum officii morem, non infuscata malivolentia, non adsueta mendacii, non fucosa, non fallax, non erudita artificio simulationis vel suburbano vel etiam urbano. Nemo Arpinas non Plancio studuit, nemo Soranus, nemo Casinas, nemo Aquinas. Tractus ille celeberrimus, Venafranus, Allifanus, tota denique ea nostra illa aspera et montuosa et fidelis et simplex et faultrix suorum regio se huius honore ornari, se augeri dignitate arbitrabatur. . . .

Here we have both sides of the shield at once—a man's affectionate remembrance of his birthplace, and the unending interest of that birthplace in the man's career.

C. K.

(To be concluded)

CICERO AND OTHERS IN "THINGS NEW AND OLD"

To judge by the effect of her discussion, in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 14.2-3, upon one reader, I have no doubt that Miss Mildred Dean does vitally interest her fortunate pupils in the Orations against Catiline. Many another good teacher of Latin does likewise—but not most other teachers of Latin in our American Schools. What I said of Cicero, and of Caesar and Xenophon, too, in *Things New and Old*, in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 13.107-111, was not really directed at those authors, nor yet at the properly-trained teacher of Greek or Latin. If such teachers were in the majority, there would be no call for suggestions from an amateur, not quite an alien, as to what should be done for the study of Greek and Latin at a critical time in the history of humane letters. There would be no crisis. Every one engaged in the teaching of Caesar would, among other things, have swallowed whole the admirable work of T. Rice Holmes; as a result, almost every student of the Gallic War would discover the fascination of Caesar's military and political genius, the mixture of good and evil in that wonderful soul. Every teacher of Cicero would be as well-equipped as Miss Dean and the generality of those who consult *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY*; and nearly all our boys and girls would be vitally interested in the father of modern

eloquence. If it will help my argument, I may say that, in spite of an imperfect training in Greek and Latin, I am interested in everything that Caesar, Cicero, and Xenophon have left us, and believe that, with a little private reading, and a little practice, I could interest almost any normal boy or girl in such works of those authors as are commonly studied.

But let us deal with the facts. The rank and file of teachers of Latin are not adequately trained. A sign (as Aristotle would say) is their inability to read Latin books in the way that books should be read. For example, they do not know how the *Aeneid* turns out at the end. Let me repeat that I am not thinking of the sort of teacher who is likely to meet these words in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY*, nor am I well-acquainted with many of the sort that I have in mind and now refer to. I am forced to judge of these latter, bad teachers—the majority—and of the suitability and unsuitability of various classical texts for use in the Schools, by the fruits that appear in the shape of University students of English.

For years in all my classes, and of late particularly in one Sophomore class where we use a very little Latin of the simplest sort, chiefly mediaeval, I have made a systematic inquiry that has yielded the following results.

(1) The would-be student of literature has generally been spoiled for Latin (and English) by his first contact with Latin; for a fatal dislike of the subject, and his apprehension when confronted with any phase of it, he may thank his first teacher of Latin. The dislike and the apprehension are acquired in the primary stages.

(2) The dislike of Caesar in University students is great and general. The exceptions that I have found are negligible.

(3) The dislike of Cicero is not so inveterate or usual as the dislike of Caesar, but nevertheless may be described as great and general. Cicero, however, and the Orations against Catiline, occasionally have one staunch defender in ten students, or two or three in twenty.

(4) Virtually all who have studied Vergil not only prefer the *Aeneid* to the Orations of Cicero and the Gallic War, but positively like the *Aeneid*.

(5) This year I found two Sophomores who knew the outcome of the *Aeneid*; at School they had read the latter six books in an English translation.

(6) I never have met a student of Ovid who has not retained a pleasant memory of the experience.

Now I am far from maintaining that the end of education is pleasure or enjoyment as undergraduates conceive of these; a true and lasting satisfaction is the end. But pleasure—an honorable pleasure suited to the age of the student—is an indispensable means; and a well-nigh universal dissatisfaction with any author as he is commonly taught is a contra-indication against the use of that author in the present state of affairs. The well-trained teacher may be left to his or her own